



# Homeschool Field Trip Programs at Merry Lea

## General Policies & Group Coordinator Guide

### GENERAL FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

**We require one 'group coordinator' to serve as the main point of contact and organizer for a visiting homeschool group. This role includes:**

- Communicating with Merry Lea about program details
- Distributing information to participating families
- Day of support: organizing groups, collecting payment and general support

#### Pricing & Details

Minimum of 10 students is required and a maximum of 60 students.

**1 adult is required for every 10 students.**

- **Students:** \$6 each for a standard program
- **Adults:** \$3 each
- **Younger Siblings:** Children 4 & under are free when accompanied by a paying adult.

#### Payment Details

- We require **one single payment** for the entire group. Please provide full payment (cash or checks to Merry Lea) on the day of the program.
- Please designate one individual to collect the entire groups' money to be turned into Merry Lea staff. We will not be able to make change on the day of the program.

#### Refund Policy

**Cancellations:** If you cancel a program, you will be charged:

- 100% of program fee for cancelling less than 1 week before program
- 50% of program fee for cancelling 1 week to 4 weeks before program
- No fee for cancelling more than 4 weeks before program

See our [scheduling policies](#) on our website for more details.

### MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TRIP

We value homeschool educators for their ability to make field trips fun and educational.

**Teachers and chaperones are encouraged to:**

- **Model curiosity and wonder.**  
Participate in the program activities with students as you're comfortable.
- **Facilitate student exploration** by allowing students to ask and answer questions themselves.
- Ask students questions like, "What do you think?" or "How can we find out?" to **foster problem-solving and inquiry learning.**
- Help direct students' attention to current activities and **model good behavior** for the group.
- **Limit cellphone use** for pictures only. If a call or text is urgent, please step away temporarily.

**Exceptions:** The refund policy (to the left) does not apply to cancellations due to dangerous weather, unscheduled school closings or unforeseen emergencies. If Merry Lea cancels a program, we will call and email when the decision is made and will provide a full refund. If you have questions about whether or not a session will occur, please contact us.

*This document is intended to provide you with the details and information needed to serve as the 'group coordinator' for a field trip at Merry Lea!*





## PROGRAM PREPARATION

### CLOTHING

Be prepared to spend most of your time outdoors regardless of the weather. \* **Please encourage students ahead of time to wear weather-appropriate clothing.**

#### What to Bring or Wear:

- **Nametags** for all students, teachers and chaperones (If you can also note the groups by different colors, numbers, letters, etc, this is more helpful!).
- **Long pants** or other protective clothing to prevent scratches, insect bites and poison ivy.
- Comfortable **closed-toe walking shoes** that can get dirty, wet or muddy.
- **Raincoat** or poncho if rain is forecasted.
- Appropriate **clothing layers** for the day's weather and temperatures.

### LOGISTICS

Programs are designed for children ages 5-12 years old. Younger siblings are welcome to attend with a paying adult however, Merry Lea educators will tailor program delivery to the intended age range. Parents can support these goals by:

- Younger sibling staying with parents at all times
- Remaining attentive to distractions: please step away from the group if a younger child needs specific care

\*Please note: not all program locations are stroller friendly. This can be confirmed during field trip confirmation.

### LUNCH

#### Merry Lea Provides:

- Drinkable well water at all program locations.
- A container for some recyclables. Merry Lea accepts plastics #1-#7, glass, paper, aluminum, cardboard and steel cans.
- A container for compostable food scraps. Merry Lea accepts plant-based scraps like fruits, veggies and bread.

#### What to Bring:

- Sack lunches and lunch supplies. There are no vending machines or food/beverages for sale at Merry Lea.
- Garbage bags. You are responsible for taking all garbage back with you.
- (Optional) Reusable water bottles.

### OTHER COMMUNICATION

- Plan for your group members to **arrive 15-30 minutes** in advance of the program start time. This allows for bathrooms, settling in, etc.
- For most programs, we will require your group to be divided into small trail groups, Ideally, these would be by age/grade level to optimize student experience. This will be communicated with you in your confirmation. Please divide the groups up in advance of the program!

### LOCATION - PLEASE READ

Specific location varies for each program. **Please check your program location found on your confirmation form & coordinate with your transportation department, if applicable.**

## Safety Policies

### EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION & CONDUCT

We expect all students to demonstrate respect for fellow students and teachers at Merry Lea.

Outdoor education involves exposure to some natural hazards like trips and falls, insect bites and stings and irritating plants. Merry Lea educators try to minimize these risks. It is imperative that students listen to directions in order to maintain safety out on the trails and inside the facilities.

Thanks for all your hard work to prepare a group for a homeschool field trip here at Merry Lea, we know it's a lot of work. Thank you in advance!

Contact Kaitlyn Sproles at [kwsproles@goshen.edu](mailto:kwsproles@goshen.edu) or 260-799-5869 with any questions.



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**Merry Lea**  
Environmental Learning Center  
of Goshen College

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